

MANIC MOMENT

Band vows to lighten live show

BY JEFF RANDALL
A&E Editor

For most punk bands, restraint is a rarely mentioned and little-practiced word.

But for the Manics, it might be a necessity.

In the past, the three-piece band has been true to its name in live performances, dropping pants, hurling firecrackers and twisting knees at shows in the basements of various friends.

Tonight, the Manics will perform at Knickerbockers, 901 O St., as an opening act for local band G.I. Jill and Estrus recording artists the Fells.

"If we're playing at a party, anything goes," said guitarist/vocalist Brooks Hitt. "At an established place, we kind of have to tone it down."

"I guess you could say it's not as X-rated."

But subdued theatrics aside, Hitt said, the band's fast-and-furious approach to rock music will remain intact.

"We played a show at the Culture Center and went through 12 songs in about 10 minutes," he said.

"This time, we're looking to stretch it out to about 15 minutes."

Flecked with traces of older punk-rockers such as the Ramones and more-recent artists such as the Drags, the Manics are what Hitt calls "a simple rock 'n' roll band."

"We're pretty aggressive, pretty



THE MANICS have undergone a few lineup changes since their inception. The group's current roster includes (from left to right) Brooks Hitt, James Saroka and Ethan Jones. MIKE WARREN/DN

Concert Preview

loud, pretty obnoxious."

The group recently rebuilt its sound with the addition of bass player Ethan Jones.

Jones' addition to the band's lineup moved former bassist James Saroka to the drums, a change that Hitt, a senior physics major at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is more than happy with.

"We used to be kind of like most old-school punk bands," he said. "Now, I'd like to think we have more of a groove."

And with confidence in the new lineup, the Manics are prepared to do more than they have in the past.

"We've been together for a couple years, but we weren't doing much," Hitt said. "Now that we're happy with who we've got, we want to do more."

But, according to Hitt, doing more doesn't mean doing what most other bands do, including professional recording or seeking out a label.

"We're not really interested in all that," he said. "We'll do what we want to do."

"For now, we're perfectly happy recording stuff ourselves."

And if that means Manics fans will have to rely solely on live performances for exposure to the band, Hitt said he wouldn't mind.

"People need to get out and do something," he said.

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We're pretty loud, pretty aggressive, pretty obnoxious."

BROOKS HITT
Manics guitarist, vocalist

"Lincoln is the strangest college town. Nobody seems to want to go to shows around here. And because of that, we've had a drought of good bands coming through."

And until that attitude changes, the Manics will continue trying to chip away at Lincolniters' apparent lack of musical involvement.

"You should have some angst.

You should have some rebelliousness," Hitt said. "You should do something other than just drink beer on the weekends."

"And now that the Edge is dead, I guess you'll have to get out once in a while."

Tonight's show is an all-ages event. It begins at 6 p.m. and has a \$4 cover charge.

Mudhead players perform original scripts

BY SARAH BAKER
Senior Reporter

It's the only performance that crams Greek Myths, Midnight rendezvous and Generation X'ers into three nights.

The Mudhead Players, the resident theater troupe at the Wagon Train Project, will take the stage this week to perform three original scripts.

Susanne Evans, a member of the group, said it's primary focus is to create theater suitable for all audiences.

"Our aim is to bring the idea

of ritual into theater," Evans said. "We want to open up a connection between art, religion and spirituality."

Evans said most of the productions the Mudhead Players perform are adapted from stories or old myths, and are original scripts written by members of the troupe.

"A lot of pre-Christian theater started out as rituals, and we want to bring that holistic idea back to theater," Evans said. "It's not just art, it's a human experience."

The performances this weekend are all written by members of the troupe.

"Tangled Up in Blue," written by Brad Bosen, co-founder of the Mudhead Players, is a romantic tragicomedy.

"The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche," by John Renfield, is an adaptation of an ancient Greek myth, and "The Next Big Thing," by Jason Blattert, tells the story of five Generation X'ers and their interaction with religion.

Evans said these performances are just like normal plays, but the actors use the scripts onstage.

"We will establish characters and concepts, and there will be minimal scenery," she said.

Evans said the audiences can expect something new and different each night with each of the different performances.

"The first show is a romantic and tragic comedy - they can expect to laugh and cry," she said. "The second show is really for all ages, and the audience can expect to gain some knowledge of Roman mythology and hear an ancient story from another culture."

"For the third show, I think they will just be surprised and entertained."

Evans encouraged people to come and see the shows because they are a unique experience.

"There is so much theater in Lincoln, and this is something different and also a chance to go for free," she said. "This is free culture, and some people might appreciate a different take from a different place."

The Mudhead Players perform Thursday through Saturday at the Wagon Train Project, 512 S. Seventh St. All shows begin at 7:30 p.m. in the Seventh Street Loft.

No admission is charged for the shows, but anyone can make a donation. For more information, call the Wagon Train Project at (402) 435-5592.